

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4787
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 1219

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PROP, IZ
SUBJECT: BAKR'S SPEECH OF JULY 16

1. SUMMARY. IRAQI PRESIDENT BAKR'S SPEECH ON OCCASION
OF JULY REVOLUTIONS WAS A RECITAL OF REGIME'S DOMESTIC
ACCOMPLISHMENTS MIXED WITH ATTACKS ON U.S. IMPERIALISM,
SYRIA, AND EFFORTS TO OBTAIN A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT.
SPEECH COMBINED PRIDE, OPTIMISM AND PARANOIA. END SUMMARY.

2. BAKR BEGAN BY RECITING ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF IRAQI
REGIME. HE THEN CLAIMED THAT IT WAS THIS VERY SUCCESS
OF IRAQI REVOLUTION OF 1958 AGAINST MONARCHY AND OF
BAATH REVOLUTION OF 1968 WHICH "STIRS THE IRE OF
IMPERIALISTS AND OF THE REACTIONARY FORCES WORKING TO
SPREAD DARKNESS, SURRENDER AND COUNTER-REVOLUTION
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THROUGHOUT THE REGION." HE EXPRESSED CONVICTION THAT
FORCES OPPOSED TO IRAQI REVOLUTION ARE ATTEMPTING TO
PENETRATE PROGRESSIVE ARAB REGIMES WITH OBJECTIVES OF
ISOLATING THOSE REGIMES FROM THE ARAB MASSES.

3. THE PRESIDENT LEFT NO DOUBT THAT IRAQ OPPOSES
EFFORTS FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE MIDDLE EAST

DISPUTE. HE CALLED FOR RELINQUISHMENT OF "CAPITULATION-IST SETTLEMENTS AND DEVIATIONIST POLICIES" AND FOR ADOPTION OF ARMED STRUGGLE AS THE ONLY WAY TO LIBERATE PALESTINE. HIS OPTIMISM ABOUT IRAQ'S OWN INTERNAL PROSPECTS AND ABOUT THE LONG-RANGE TRENDS IN THE AREA CONTRASTED WITH DEEP CONCERN ABOUT CURRENT AREA SITUATION. "RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CURRENT BACKSLIDING IN ARAB CONDITIONS MUST BE PLACED AT THE DOORSTEP OF THOSE WHO HAVE ABANDONED THE LINE OF NATIONAL STRUGGLE AND WERE SWEEPED ALONG BY THE SCHEMES OF AMERICAN IMPERIALISM. AMERICA, SAID BAKR, "CONTINUES TO PLAY ITS ROLE OF BREAKING THE WILL OF ARAB STRUGGLE, DIVIDING THE ARAB RANKS AND DRAWING THE ARAB PARTIES TO ONE CONCESSION AFTER ANOTHER. BY SUCH DEVIOUS METHODS AMERICA PURSUES THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE OF PERPETUATING THE ZIONIST OCCUPATION."

4. BAKR CONDEMNED SYRIAN REGIME IN EVEN HARSHER TERMS AND TOOK PAINS TO LAY TO REST RUMORS OF POSSIBLE RECONCILIATION BETWEEN BAGHDAD AND DAMASCUS. "WE HEREBY PUBLICLY ANNOUNCE THAT WE WILL NEVER EXTEND OUR HAND TO THOSE WHO HAVE DEVIATED FROM THE LINE OF NATIONAL STRUGGLE." WITH REGARD TO LEBANON, BAKR REITERATED THE IRAQI CALL FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF SYRIAN FORCES FROM LEBANON. HE ALSO STATED, FOR THE FIRST TIME TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, IRAQI SUPPORT FOR "REBUILDING
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THE ORGANS OF THE LEBANESE STATE". PREDICTABLY, HOWEVER, BAKR ADDED A CALL FOR PROTECTION OF THE PALESTINE RESISTANCE IN LEBANON.

5. ON THE SUBJECT OF IRAQI FOREIGN POLICY, BAKR TOOK CREDIT FOR BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS OF MUTUAL ADVANTAGE WITH A WIDE VARIETY OF COUNTRIES ENJOYING DIFFERENT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS. HE NONETHELESS ESPOUSED GIVING FULL WEIGHT TO PALESTINE ISSUE IN IRAQ'S BILATERAL RELATIONS. "ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL POINTS ON WHICH THE PARTY AND THE REVOLUTION HAS LAID CONSIDERABLE STRESS IS THE ACT OF DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN FRIENDS WHO STAND WITH US IN OUR STRUGGLE, THOSE POWERS WHICH DO NOT ASSUME A CLEAR CUT POSITION IN SUPPORT OF RIGHT AND JUSTICE IN OUR STRUGGLE AGAINST USURPING ZIONISM, AND THOSE POWERS WHICH STAND CLEARLY BY THE SIDE OF OUR ENEMIES. TO CONFUSE THE ABOVE QUARTERS WITH ONE ANOTHER IS BOUND TO INVITE GREAT LOSSES, ERODE INTERNATIONAL RESPECT FOR US AND WEAKEN THE POSITION OF THOSE WHO SUPPORT US."

6. ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT BAKR SPOKE FOR LESS THAN ONE

HOUR, HIS ILL HEALTH WAS APPARENT AT ABOUT MID-POINT
IN THE SPEECH. BAKR'S ARTICULATION BECAME BLURRED,
AND THERE WERE LONG PAUSES BETWEEN SENTENCES WHICH HE
READ FROM A PREPARED TEXT.

7. COMMENT: FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF
POLITICAL AFFAIRS ZAHAWI, WHEN ASKED BY ME HOW I
SHOULD INTERPRET THE REFERENCES TO THE UNITED STATES IN
THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH, SUGGESTED THAT I VIEW THEM IN
THE CONTEXT OF AN ADDRESS WHICH WAS DIRECTED PRIMARILY TO
AN IRAQI AUDIENCE AND, MORE GENERALLY, TO THE ARAB
NATION. ZAHAWI DID NOT OFFER ANY SUBSTANTIVE
ENLARGEMENT ON THE SPEECH. OTHER IRAQIS, HOWEVER,
BELIEVE THAT THE THREE-FOLD DIVISION OF COUNTRIES
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REFLECTS A CAREFULLY CONSIDERED LINE OF IRAQI POLICY,
AS WORKED OUT BY BAKR AND SADDAM HUSSEIN. THE
STATES WHICH STAND WITH IRAQ ARE PRIMARILY FROM THE
THIRD WORLD. THOSE WHICH HAVE NOT ASSUMED A CLEAR-
CUT POSITION ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE ARE UNDERSTOOD
TO BE THE SOVIET UNION AND MOST STATES OF EASTERN AND
WESTERN EUROPE. THIS LEAVE THE UNITED STATES AS THE
PRIMARY POWER WHICH STANDS BY THE SIDE OF IRAQ'S
ENEMIES. IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE IRAQI REGIME IS STILL
UNREADY TO VIEW U.S. POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST AS
ANYTHING BUT HOSTILE.
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